# Navigating Professional Identity: Insights into the Effects of Post-Observation Conferences on Educational Supervisors

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## Abstract

This research endeavors to investigate the influence of post-observation conferences (POCs) on the professional identity of educational supervisors within public education settings. POCs represent dialogic sessions conducted between supervisors and teachers subsequent to classroom observations, where they deliberate on the strengths and areas for enhancement in the observed teaching practices. Professional identity, in this context, pertains to the self-understanding and self-image concerning one's role and responsibilities as an educational supervisor. Employing a qualitative, narrative inquiry research design, the study utilizes semi-structured interviews and a focus group as data collection methods. The study involves two English language educational supervisors located in Makkah, Saudi Arabia, as participants. Data analysis is conducted through thematic analysis, guided by Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases. The findings underscore the significant impact of POCs on the professional identity of educational supervisors, facilitating avenues for learning, feedback, reflection, and collaboration. Moreover, the study identifies challenges and offers suggestions to enhance the quality and effectiveness of POCs. By contributing to the literature on educational supervision and professional development, this study furnishes educational implications for practice.

**Keywords:** supervisors, post-observation conferences, professional identity, identity formation, supervisors' perceptions

## 1. Introduction

Professional identity in the field of teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) has become a trending topic in research in the last decade (Gu & Benson, 2014; Izadinia, 2015; Barkhuizen, 2016; Ivanova & Skara-Mincane, 2016; Donaghue, 2020; Gholami et al., 2021; Wei, 2021). Further, the number of studies which discuss factors that contribute to the construction of identity in the field of TESOL is growing rapidly, see (Varghese et al., 2005; Tsui, 2007; Urzúa & Vásquez, 2008; Grimmett et al., 2009; Trent, 2010; Sutherland & Markauskaite, 2012; Yuan, 2016; Sang, 2020; Donaghue, 2020; Villegas et al., 2020) to name a few. In addition, these factors vary depending on the angle from which the researcher is looking at identity. For example, Gu and Benson studied how sociocultural factors effect teacher' identity as it is constructed in the course of teacher education (2014). Another study focused on the mentoring relationships between mentors and preservice teachers in regard to how these relationships play a role in changing the professional identities of teachers (Izadinia, 2015). Barkhuizen, on the other hand, discussed how reflective practices are related to teachers' awareness and understanding of their professional identities (2016). Similarly, Ivanova & Skara-Mincane published an article that looks at reflective self-evaluation as a factor which helps develop professional identities (2016). In a more recent study, another article considered the interrelation and tension between personal experiences of a teacher and the social-political contexts and their effects on professional identity formation (Wei, 2021). This particular article referred to the concept of "personal meaning-making" experiences that pose critical challenges which require those experiencing them to fully live them as well as think thoroughly about them both in personal or professional contexts (Wei, 2021 p. 3).

Similarly, one of the main factors that contribute to the construction of identity and is constantly recurrent in literature is the professional context (Sutherland & Markauskaite, 2012; Tateo, 2012; Barkhuizen, 2016; Ivanova & Skara-Mincłne, 2016; Edwards & Burns, 2016; Noonan, 2019). The professional context is seen as one of the most significant contexts contributing to professional identity formation (Farrell, 2011; Izadinia, 2015; Shah et

al., 2018; Andreasen et al., 2019). For instance, Edwards & Burns pointed out to the "struggle" that teachers go through in search of legitimizing "new identities" in professional contexts (2016, p. 735). On the other hand, Cheng shed some light on how do professional interactions and all their formed experiences have the protential to shape professional identities (2021). According to Wenger's theory of identity formation, every profession requires a certain degree of engagement with others which consequently paves the way for professional contexts where identities emerge and are formed (1998). Further, participating in professional contexts encourages participants to develop their own self-directed professional identities (De Bruijn & Leeman, 2011; Cremers et al., 2016). That is to say, when participants intentionally choose to attend certain professional events, as opposed to other events, their awareness of their professional identity formation is actually taking shape and developing. Usually, educators have rare chances that offer them the opportunity to interact and discuss their practice with their peers (Farrell, 2011). In this line of thought, a post-observation conference (POC) is one of the most important professional contexts where teachers and educational supervisors engage in dialogic educational interactions regarding the teaching practice. A POC can be defined as the dyadic meeting that occurs between a teacher and an educational supervisor. During a POC, the teacher's performance is discussed and/or assessed, constructively, collectively, or both, immediately after an actual classroom-teaching has been observed. Further, the assessment process usually focuses on individualized supervision, based on the specific teacher that has been observed, to assist in improving that teacher's instructional performance. This process may cause some tensions and power negotiations between supervisors and teachers (Heaphy & Dutton, 2008; Kim & Silver, 2016; Donaghue, 2020b). In reference to POCs proceedings, Copland described how these meetings might suggest that supervisors have the right to deliver assessing remarks to teachers, while teachers could provide only self-assessment which might be sometimes overwhelming (2010). Clearly, POCs proceedings do not always run as smooth as one might think. Correspondingly, it is crucial to mention that the assessment of one's ability to practice as well as one's professional contribution is one of the most emotionally stimulating activities in the professional life (Vásquez, 2004; Narcisse & Harcourt, 2008). Thus, the emotionality that is associated with POCs, which are sometime seen by teachers as an assessment process where judgments are eventually made, must be considered in approaching interactions that actually take place between educational supervisors and teachers during POCs.

These conferences provide an opportunity for English language educational supervisors (hereafter referred to as supervisors) to meet with English language teachers (hereafter referred to as teachers), after classroom observations. During these conferences, supervisors discuss the teachers' practices, strengths, and areas of possible improvement (Mette & Riegel, 2018). In addition, POCs provide an opportunity for supervisors and teachers to discuss the observations that have been made as well as an opportunity for teachers and supervisors to reflect on their practices. Also, they offer supervisors and teachers the chance to discuss potential areas of improvement and to develop a plan for how to move forward. In addition, POCs can be seen as professional events where actual interactions happen and lived experiences are formed between supervisors and teachers. These experiences and interactions that take place in a professional context can have a significant impact on the teacher's and the supervisor's sense of their professional identities. Since POCs are places where interactions occur between individuals, it is understandable that incidents happen where things might not go the way they were intended to. Before we dive into the ocean of interactions, we will take a look at what is meant by educational supervision. In the following lines, and from my own experience as an English language educational supervisor, we will take a brief look at the profession of educational supervision and what is typically involved in being an educational supervisor.

With all that said, and as demonstrated above, POCs are of great significance when it comes to professional interactions between supervisors and teachers. The notions of experiences and professional contexts are fundamental to this current paper. That is, the quest to study how the way supervisors interact with teachers and create experiences in professional contexts could eventually impact their professional identities formation. To sum up, the duties of a supervisor can vary depending on the context in which they work, but then, this paper is only concerned with activities that supervisors perform which involve interactions with teachers during one professional event which is a POC, and how would this event impact the professional identity of supervisors.

*1.1 Purpose of the Study*

Dewey has demonstrated how interactions have a direct effect on formulating experiences which have an impact on future interactions and experiences in what he referred to as an "experiential continuum" (1997, p. 9). In short, experiential continuum suggests that each experience adopts something from prior experiences and modifies the quality of succeeding experiences. Looking through this lens, one can clearly see the continuous association between a POC with the subsequent one. That is to say, a previous proceeding of a POC must have a direct or

indirect effect on the next POC as an inevitable result of how individuals interact and recognize their experiences. Also, Dewey asserts that the nature of impact on subsequent experiences, whether positive or negative, depends on the quality of the previous ones within any given context (1986). Again, a POC is one of the contexts where interactions take place between teachers and supervisors and that is why this paper suggests that it is one of the most important interactive professional events that influences supervisors' professional identity.

For this reason, I started to realize the significance of the supervisors' perceived knowledge regarding their, sometimes spontaneous or natural, contribution to the construction and development of their own professional identities during POCs in our local context. Similarly, I reflected on my past experiences as a teacher during previous POCs and remembered some instances that have impacted my career as a teacher and then as a supervisor. Consequently, I came to the realization that POCs have contributed to my personal understanding about the profession in general and supervision in particular. Additionally, several studies have implied that educators have to self-study their learning trajectories in order to enhance their practice (Ajayi & Lee, 2005; Pena & Almaguer, 2005; Scheeler et al., 2006; Soslau, 2015). So far, and during my reading through relevant literature, I came to realize that such valuable experiences and professional perceptions have not been scientifically documented before. Therefore, the purpose of this narrative-inquiry qualitative research is to report on the supervisors' perceived knowledge about their understanding and awareness of the construction and development of their professional identities during POCs that are held with teachers in public and private schools in Makkah city, Saudi Arabia. The aim is to come up with relevant educational implications that would help look at POCs as a comprehensible positive professional event for all the parties involved. At this stage in the research, the perceived knowledge of the supervisors in constructing and developing their professional identities will be defined as the knowledge that supervisors have acquired through past experiences and how this knowledge is advocating and affirming the construction of their professional identities. The research will try to provide answers to the following research questions:

(1) How do POCs impact the professional identities of supervisors?

(2) Would supervisors' perceptions help make POC a more constructive professional event?

## 2. Research Design

This research follows a qualitative approach using a narrative-inquiry design. Creswell and Creswell characterized qualitative research as interpretative and defined it as "an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (2018). As the researcher is deeply involved in the study, the qualitative design takes into consideration this involvement for the purpose of allowing the researcher to get a reflective and comprehensive understanding of the matter under investigation (Cohen et al., 2013; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Clark et al., 2021). Further, the aim of a qualitative research is understanding and explaining perceptions and experiences of a group of people (Kumar, 2011).

### 2.1 Research Participants and Data Collection

For the purpose of this research, two male English language educational supervisors were interviewed. They are all residents of Makkah, and all of them have a minimum experience of thirteen years in the field of educational supervision. The participants were between 46 and 55 years old and both of them were assigned pseudonyms as S1 and S2.

For this part of the research, three rounds of interviews were made. In the first round, I conducted a face-to-face semi-structural interview with each of the participants. In the second round, a follow-up interview with each of the participants to reaffirm and confirm my initial interpretations. All the interviews were conducted at the participants convenience. Finally, in the third round, a focus-group interview was conducted with the participants to reach a mutual understanding and agreement on the interpretations of the first two rounds.

### 2.2 Data Analysis

All the individual interviews were conducted face-to-face. The data analysis in qualitative research relies on the subjective interpretation of the collected data (Cohen et al., 2013; Creswell & Creswell, 2017). In preparation for qualitative analysis, the researcher revisited the collected data several times to grasp the general sense of the information contained and to write preliminary thoughts of his understanding. Then the data was represented inductively by three predetermined themes which are: a supervisor as a former teacher, a novice supervisor, an experienced supervisor. Also, the above themes, as categories of their own, provided subcategories that were coded as sub-themes which reflected the participants' perceptions about their experiences in a natural flow of thoughts. Each of above themes have sub-themes.

The purpose of this step is to establish a timeline to see how do the interviewees perceive the phenomena in terms of participants' expressions and thoughts about their lived experiences during POCs, and how they relate their perceptions to past experiences. Also, the above themes, as categories of their own, provided subcategories that were coded as sub-themes which reflected the participants' perceptions about their experiences in a natural flow of thoughts.

## 3. Presentation and Discussion of Results

As mentioned above, the various themes emerged which basically fashioned a chronological understanding of the professional identity formation of supervisors. Primarily, as narrative inquiry suggests, it is logical that this research follows a chronological timeline to pinpoint the exact times in which the participants have reflected on for their identity shifts. Consequently, it signifies the process that they perceive which reflects on how they realize this process and how they see themselves as professional supervisors. In the following sections, all the themes are presented. Relevant comments of the participants from the interviews are presented in quotation marks along with the interpretations confirmed by the participants.

### 3.1 A Supervisor as a Former Teacher

Typically, all supervisors in our local context were previous teachers who excelled in their work. As established in literature review above, past experiences impact future ones. In order to cover the impact of POCs on their professional identity, it was important to take a look into the supervisors past experiences. To that end, the first question of this research is about the perceptions of supervisors regarding the role of POCs in shaping their professional identities. At the beginning of the first interview with each of the participants and aiming for a common ground as a launch-pad for a mutual understanding of the concept of professional identity, I asked the participants about their personal views on this concept and how it would be different than their identity in general. With a clear reference to the first predetermined theme which is 'the supervisor as a previous teacher', all the participants agreed on one fundamental aspect which is their experiences of previous POCs as teachers. This aspect constitutes a clear reference to how supervisors look at and understand their professional career.

#### 3.1.1 Past Experience

During the interviews, both of the participants, S1 and S2, reflected on their experiences of their first POCs as teachers and how these first POCs played an important role in their professional identity as teachers and later on as supervisors. The most significant impact of the participants first POCs as teachers was the memory that they held with them whether that memory was pleasant or bad. The participants responses to one of the interviews questions, which was about whether or not they have experienced any transformational change during past POCs, were critical to understand their current supervision practices which was reflected on their professional identity.

Both of the participants specified certain incidents that were imprinted in their memories. S1 described his first ever POC as "baffling and full of negative feelings". The reason was that his first supervisor overwhelmed him by only pointing out negative observation notes which made S1 "confused" about the aim of that POC and "unconfident" of his work as a teacher. This specific POC related memory was the reason behind one of his later practices in supervision which is his decision to "make sure that none of the teachers he supervises feel the same as he did in that first POC". Moreover, his enthusiasm was apparent when he mentioned this point, which clearly shows how the negative proceedings of one particular POC have undoubtedly influenced the construction of his professional identity.

On the other hand, S2 remembered one contrasting and desirable transformational change that happened during a past POC at the time when he was a teacher. This particular memory caused him to almost "mimic" its proceedings in his current practice as a supervisor. He reminisced on one POC event that he had as a teacher which, in his words he "always cherishes" and which made a long-lasting effect on his "professional career", or else professional identity. This emotional reminiscing clearly signifies how past experiences during POCs could have a tremendous impact on professional identity.

Again, the impact of POCs continues not only to be in accordance with Dewey's concept of experiential continuum (1997) which motivated this research, but also in accordance with all the literature that was mentioned above in the literature review which asserts that interactions and emotions may influence future professional undertakings (Urzúa and Vásquez 2008; Timoštšuk & Ugaste, 2010; Tateo, 2012; Barkhuizen, 2016; Ivanova & Skara-MincŁne, 2016; Donaghue 2018; Cheng, 202; Gholami et al., 2021).

*3.2 A Novice Supervisor*

embarking on a new practice is overwhelming particularly when the new job sometimes requires not only interacting with old colleagues, but also evaluating their work. In addition, supervision involves roles that exceed traditional teaching duties, such as creating and maintaining professional discourse with school officials as well as handling resistance and issues of relations with teachers they supervise among which are experienced and novice teachers (Orland-Barak, 2006).

Once more, both of the participants highlighted the significance of their first POCs as new supervisors. Moreover, they reflected on how their past professional relationships with teachers and the different than anticipated practices of supervisors have played a fundamental role in their professional identity formation. As supervisors who are trying to make their ways in the profession, both of the participants mentioned incidents that occurred during their first POCs which were challenging and interesting to remember.

3.2.1 Past Professional Relationships

On the one hand, S1 commented on how the first POC that he held with a past colleague was "different" than other POCs that he previously conducted with teachers who he did not know before. He explained that this specific POC has added an "extra layer of knowledge" which helped him advance his understanding of himself as a supervisor today. Further, S1 described how it was "difficult" for him to "manoeuvre past his personal acquaintance" and go straight to delivering crucial feedback remarks. This first incident is crucial to professional identity formation since it added a substantial data about how to deal with such instance as a supervisor.

On the other hand, S2 described his first POC with a teacher, whom he has previously known on a professional level, as "critical and awkward" which required him to "contemplate about it" after his actual visit to the school. He reflected on this specific POC as he recalled how it "necessitated changes in his overall perspective of supervision" and what he would deal with in order to be a professional supervisor. Accordingly, the fact that S2 had to put an extra effort of contemplation as well as his conflicting feelings towards the profession were necessary in order to carry out the proceedings of such events shows how past relationships play a fundamental role in the professional identity formation in regard to POCs conducted with teachers that supervisors have known before.

As established earlier, interaction as a social and professional concept, which is a prominent human behaviour, is a major factor that impacts identity formation in general and professional identity in particular (Wenger 1998; Gee 2000; Urzúa & Vásquez, 2008; Edwards & Burns, 2016). In this case, the rules that usually govern professional interactions during POCs were altered due to the fact that the participants had previously known each other on a professional level.

3.2.2 Unanticipated Practices

Both of the participants agreed on the fact that basically being a supervisor has more than meets the eye. They commented on several incidents where they had to "cut a POC short" because of other required supervision duties. Further, S1 stated how sometimes being "unprofessional in one work related aspect is in fact very professional in another" when it comes to the overall understanding of supervision. Thus, his recollection of several incidents that required him to haste the proceedings of POCs, in order to catch up with a sudden meeting for instance, signifies how such unanticipated practices frame the way he carries out such events.

In addition, the realization of such unanticipated POCs proceedings shows how supervisors perceive themselves as professionals. Accordingly, and in reference to "shortened POCs and/or online ones", S2 maintained that such incidents contributed to his "perception of his supervision as a profession" and made him realize how certain job duties can have an "overwhelming impact" on other job duties and consequently on his identity as a supervisor. From a professional standpoint and as a supervisor, I can relate to how such detailed circumstances can have an impact on one's career, hence one's professional identity.

Thus, the significance of these incidents arises in the fact that both of the participants referred to them when asked about what would make POCs more productive. With that said, unanticipated practices during POCs are clearly one of the factors which have inclined supervisors to make professional amendments that helped in shaping the process of their professional identity progression. Also, acquiring the ability to deal with and perform unanticipated practices during such a professional interaction adds to the value of POCs and their impact on the professional identity of supervisors. Thus, the process in which one needs to acquire such professional knowledge indicates that professional identity is dynamic and not static (Irby, 2011; Sutherland & Markauskaite, 2012; Izadinia, 2014). Also, being in the contexts in which individuals interact professionally,

such as POCs, help them start identifying and developing a particular professional identity (Lammert et al., 2020).

*3.3 An Experienced Supervisor*

Being supervisors for at least thirteen years, the participants have accumulated an efficient level of educational supervision's knowledge for them to be identified as experienced supervisors. Even though, they are still aware of the fact that their professional identity is far from being complete in the sense that they are still making decisions when it comes to the way they are handling POCs in a professional manner. That is to say, both of the participants shared stories of how they still experience hard times during the proceedings of POCs that are held with defensive teachers, whether the teachers are experienced or highly qualified teachers. Phrases like "it is difficult to change attitudes" and "judgmental and prejudices" appeared in relation to memories concerning POCs that were held with teachers who had a self-justifying or self-protective stance to the proceedings of POCs with visiting supervisors.

3.3.1 Changing Attitudes

Attitudes are considered mental predispositions, which refers to an individual's tendency to respond in a certain manner, whether favourable or unfavourable, towards a certain feature of an object, an individual, or an event (Anghelache & Benţea, 2012; Sharbain & Tan, 2012). Further, attitudes might be looked at as a mixture of cognitive, affective, and behavioural components in regard to dealing with a certain thing, although the three components do not usually appear in a perfect balance (Issan et al., 2012; Sharbain & Tan, 2012). For instance, some scholars assert that some techniques which supervisors might use during POCs proceedings, such as WH. questions that are used as an initial query, were often met with a non-embracing attitude and were looked at by teachers as inferences for lack of knowledge that could lead to negative evaluation (Kim & Silver, 2016). Consequently, dealing with teachers that respond with an unfavourable manner to supervisors' visits, particularly during POCs, is challenging.

S2 elaborated on how "frustrating" it is to have repeated POCs with teachers how do not like supervisors' visits for one reason or the other. Moreover, he explained that even though he has "almost seen it all when it comes to POCs", he is still "making whatever appropriate changes" which are "needed" when conducting such events with defensive teachers. Further, S2 described how he usually spends considerable amount of time "reflecting" on such events. He also revealed that sometimes he resorts to asking for "support" from other fellow supervisors regarding "alternative methods" for conducting POCs that are likely to be on the defensive side of interaction.

Likewise, S1 stated that "typical tactics may not be helpful" as he remembered some POCs held with "experienced" or "highly qualified" teachers who opt for the defensive during professional interactions. Also, when asked about the effect of the negotiation of power during POCs, S1 mentioned that such particular professional events come with their "unique challenges" that require "unprecedented accommodation", knowing that they usually take place at least twice each year. He stated that only through "relating to what teachers say" and "trial and error" he sometimes manages to succeed in achieving productive POCs.

In accordance to supervisors' perceived knowledge mentioned in the literature review above (Park et al., 1988; Yuan, 2016; Farrell, 2018), sometimes supervisors come to schools preoccupied as in having thoughts about the teachers they are about to visit. Whether these thoughts are due to past experiences with the same teachers or due to unfounded information drifting between supervisors, they usually have some unsought for effects on POCs and their overall quality. Further, the reason behind these effects is not that these thoughts are being facts but for the supervisors being humanly disposed towards reacting upon such information.

In response to a question about the negotiation of power during POCs, the prejudice was expected as a theme since experienced supervisors have had their share of visiting and conducting POCs with the same teachers and eventually have framed some opinions about them. For instance, S1 stated that it is true that "sometimes he still has his own prejudices about some teachers he supervises" due to previously conducted POCs with them. Also, he acknowledges that these prejudices generally "steer the direction of POCs towards sometimes unintended outcomes", which adds to the significance of the nature of human interactions that have a direct effect on identity in general. Moreover, he pointed out that though he is "aware of these prejudices", he is still trying to come up with a "technique to avoid undesirable outcomes".

On the other hand, S2 continued on the same line of thought in response to the same question. He mentioned that previously conducted POCs "inform his thoughts" about future POCs. Moreover, he maintained that his preoccupied mind should be self-reflected upon through reflective practice. Also, he recognised the need for

dealing with such "unintentional prejudices" in a positive manner. He stated that the fact that he is "aware" of such prejudices requires him to "reflect more and to reach a level of flexibility" to accommodate such thoughts.

## 4. Conclusion

In the first interview, S1 explained how being ready in the period before deciding to be a supervisor constitutes the first shift of one's professional identity. He stated that "for someone to be willing to undertake a different practice definitely requires being ready with a slightly different mindset" which clearly points to a certain modification in the professional identity of the yet-to-be a supervisor. Also, S1 explained how every profession necessitates different identity because of the different "practices and objectives" and this is why the moment one decides that they are ready to change profession is crucial to the formation process of their professional identity.

Likewise, S2 emphasized the importance of "being prepared for making the move from being a teacher to becoming a supervisor" which also highlights the significance of the central moment of the initial mindset shift between a teacher and a supervisor. He emphasized the intellectual shift that occurs when a teacher opts for "professional development" programs that are "more suitable for supervision rather than teaching". In addition, S2 pointed out that once this shift occurred to him, and as a sign of being "ready", he immediately started to discuss and ask about what does it take to become a supervisor, and this was a topic that he talked about with his colleagues as well as his supervisor.

Educational supervisors contribute significantly to the development of teachers' professional competencies and the quality of their instructional practices through POCs. Although supervisors are usually abandoned in literature, literature that studies the formation of supervisors' professional identity is scares (Donaghue 2019; Donaghue, 2020). Moreover, and to the best of my knowledge, no research that studies the impact of POCs on the professional identity of supervisors was found during my reading of relevant literature. This thesis addressed this research gab by qualitatively examining factors that contribute to the professional identity of supervisors during POCs from the point of view of supervisors. Further, using a narrative inquiry design, which is suitable for chronologically establishing a timeline of events (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Clandinin, 2022), this study found that POCs have a significant impact on the professional identity formation of supervisors throughout the progression of their professional careers.

In the analysis, this paper demonstrated how the perceptions of two supervisors tend to agree that certain incidents, which occurred during the proceedings of POCs, have affected their overall understanding of the professional supervision and, in due course, have contributed in shaping their professional identity. Indeed, it is all about interactions that are taking place within professional events. In accordance with the relevant literature (Gee, 2000; Urzúa & Vásquez, 2008; Donaghue, 2020), this paper has pointed out that interacting with others is fundamental to identity formation of supervisors. Moreover, it has been established that the quality of the interactions, whether social or professional, is usually determined by previous experiences, and the quality of current experiences lay the grounds for the quality of future ones (Dewey, 1997). That is to say, the impact of POCs continues to be in accordance with Dewey's concept of experiential continuum (1997) which motivated this research in the first place, and with all the literature that was mentioned above in the literature review as well which asserts that interactions and emotions may influence future professional undertakings.

In addition, supervisors must be aware of the outcomes of their professional interactions with teachers. Not only do these interactions have an effect on teachers, but also on supervisors and on the professional identity of both. Finally, as mentioned above, several studies have implied that educators have to self-study their learning trajectories in order to enhance their practice (Pena & Almaguer, 2005; Scheeler et al., 2006; Soslau, 2015). With the process of self-studying for the sole purpose of improving one's practice, one can only hope for a diverse set of professional interactions that could provide a unique professional path for improvement and development.

### 4.1 Implications of the Study

Changes in society are leading to new expectations in regard to the role of education and its desired results. Consequently, these changes demand new insights on supervision's quality and supervisors' competences. Therefore, there is an eminent need to have a more explicit description of what constitute quality in supervision. In addition, this paper shows that an investigation of the possible impact of different personal relationships in educational-professional contexts would be an appreciated addition as further research is needed.

Supervisors can facilitate the proceedings of POCs; however, this paper suggests that supervisors need to be aware that these POCs are not a straightforward information-seeking and information-providing events, but are interactional events which take place within the limitations of socio-professional settings that require certain

social skills. These skills can be seen as opportunities and areas for professional development programs that are aimed at novice and/or experienced supervisors. POCs can be seen as socio-professional events that have their own unique features. For this reason, each POC can be handled and thought of differently in terms of the preschool visits' procedures that supervisors might be able to do.

Establishing a professional development community for supervisors is vital when it comes to understanding and dealing with POC as a professional context. That is, scheduling weekly professional development meetings with supervisors from the same and/or different subjects, backgrounds, and experiences is extremely helpful in advancing supervision's practices in general and POCs proceedings in particular (Carter et al., 2023). These communities make planning, anticipating, and understanding POCs easier for supervisors which would in due course help make POCs more fruitful and constructive professional events.

Finally, reflective practice has proven to be a highly recommended, important, and a fit self-derived professional development tool (Farrell, 2011; Kim & Silver, 2016; Tonna et al., 2017; Glanz, 2021). Throughout the interviews conducted in this research, and by asking questions that provoked the participants to reflect on their practices, it was clear for the participants how important and beneficial it is for professionals to regularly self-reflect on their practices as a tool for improvement.

### 4.2 Limitations

Due to the fact that this study was conducted in Makkah, Saudi Arabia, and its participants were only two male supervisors, its findings cannot be generalized. Also, further research is needed that includes female supervisors in the sample. In addition, the research design used in this paper established a relative timeline for professional identity formation in relation to careers in teaching and supervising which might suggest the significance of combining participants that are currently working as teachers in a different research design. Finally, studying POC through different theoretical lenses and different research methods should provide deeper insights to the phenomena. This would help practitioners in the field of educational supervision better advance their knowledge and practice.

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